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INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE



UNEP

IPCC TO PREPARE REPORT ON EXTREME EVENTS AND DISASTERS 23rd April 2009, Antalya, Turkey

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) will prepare a Special Report on « Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation ».

The decision was taken today by the 30th Session of the Panel, on the last day of its meeting in Antalya, Turkey. The IPCC Working Group II (WG II), which deals with "Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability" will carry on with the preparation of the report.

"In its Fourth Assessment Report (AR4), the IPCC had found that climate change was being manifested in the nature of changed frequency, intensity and length of many extreme events, such as floods, droughts, storms and extreme temperatures. This special report will generate knowledge on these extreme events and their characteristics, whereby the global community can prepare more effectively for adapting to future risks posed by the hazards that these occurrences will present. Communities at the local level and national governments can deal with such extreme events by adopting a range of disaster risk reduction strategies, and prevent some of the worst humanitarian consequences that they are projected to give rise to" says Mr Rajendra Pachauri, the Chairman of the IPCC.

The Special Report was proposed at the Panel's 29th Session by the government of Norway with the involvement of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), the UN organization overseeing the development of disaster reduction policy. A meeting of more than one hundred experts from 51 countries was convened in March 2009 to provide advice to the Panel on whether to develop a Special Report. "There has been a consensus among the experts on the opportunity to produce such a report" – explained Mr Vicente Barros, WG II Co-Chair, to the Panel "Extreme events are one of the direct consequences of climate change, with severe economic repercussions. There's new and relevant scientific literature subsequent to the AR4, in particular on disaster risk management, most of which is grey literature, which will make the effort to assess. The report will be an extremely useful tool for governments to learn how to manage disasters, and it is also a very important support to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) work, in particular the Nairobi work program to help parties make informed decisions on practical adaptation actions". Mr Christopher Field, the other WG II Co-Chair, stressed the value of producing a report which integrates the findings of the climate change scientific community and the disaster risk management community.

The expert meeting provided an outline for the report which was today approved by the Panel. It will include 9 chapters, three of which on managing the risk, focusing on the different levels of organization: community based responses; national scale responses and international responses. Two main case studies will be carried out throughout all chapters, while chapter 9 will be entirely dedicated to case studies. Key main topics to be assessed will be the frequency, intensity and duration of extreme events; vulnerability; and disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.

A great number of countries provided inputs in the Panel discussion this morning, and there was universal support for the preparation of this Special Report, considered very timely and needed. "Comments highlighted the importance of focusing on the practical applications for the decisionmakers who need to manage the risk of extreme events; on the need to integrate the new science and to integrate the work of the different scientific communities involved. The clearest message was that climate change will be the central piece of the report, the integration with disaster management being the infrastructure surrounding it" – concluded Mr Christopher Field.

The 200- 250 pages Special Report is planned to be released in the second half of 2011. A representative of ISDR will be part of the Steering Committee. Special reports of the IPCC follow the same comprehensive proceedings as the Assessment Reports, taking into consideration all the relevant scientific literature produced worldwide, with a multi-stage review process and geographical balance in the composition of the authors' teams.

For more information you can see the document on the Scoping Paper for the Special Report at <http://www.ipcc.ch/meetings/session30/doc14.pdf>

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